A Publication for Employees of the Missouri Department of Transportation

# Connections

May 2011

## Missouri Selected to Host 2012's National Work Zone Event

*by Melissa Black*

On the heels of Work Zone Awareness Week, Missouri recently was chosen from several other state nominees to host the national work zone kick-off event in April 2012.

"We wanted to select a state that's doing something wonderful that could be shared with the rest of the nation," says James Baron, director of communications for the American Traffic Safety Services Association. "The national committee selected Missouri because we were really impressed with what the state is doing with work zone awareness."

The kick-off event will take place on Route 141 in St. Louis County. The Route 141 project reconstructs a two-mile stretch of the roadway, upgrading the road from a three-lane road with at-grade intersections into a six-lane freeway with multiple interchanges. The roadway is necessary to enhance the flow of traffic through the region, reduce congestion and generate an estimated $1 billion in economic impact over the next 20 years. The $45 million Route 141 project is Missouri's largest American Recovery and Reinvestment Act project.

"This type of project is a perfect example of how transportation affects us all is some way or another," says Don Hillis, MoDOT's director of System Management. "Whether we're talking about work zone safety, traffic flow, reducing congestion or economic impacts – transportation is personal to each of us."

MoDOT also has committed to testing several innovative techniques on this project, including testing intelligent compaction, two-lift paving, and a photo catalytic additive for the concrete which absorbs and breaks down pollution into harmless elements (smog-eating concrete).

"This combination of a major construction project, extensive cooperation between state and local governments, environmental stewardship and construction innovation make this a perfect location for a national event about work zone safety," Hillis says. "This also gives Missouri the opportunity to highlight a first-class construction project, and show the importance of keeping workers and drivers safe in a high-volume work-zone environment."

Every April since 2000, the Federal Highway Administration, American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials and the American Traffic Safety Services Association have partnered together to host a national event to recognize and focus on roadway work zone safety.

The event, as we know it today, is National Work Zone Awareness Week.

The original concept was to rotate the annual April "kick-off" within the Washington, D.C. metro area between the District of Columbia, Maryland and Virginia. Today's national WZAW Executive Committee concluded the best way to determine a host state for the 2012 and future national media events would be though a competitive selection process.

Besides receiving funds to help cover event costs, Missouri will also receive a trophy to display for the entire year, as well as having the event covered by AASHTO television and recognition in national press releases by the Federal Highway Administration. The National Work Zone Memorial will also be shipped to Missouri for inclusion as a centerpiece of the national kick-off.

## Talent + Empowerment + Incentive = Innovation

*by Kristi Jamison*

It is said that necessity is the mother of invention. Lean times are calling on MoDOT to find more innovative ways to do things better, faster and cheaper. One of those innovations – the TowPLow – has now earned national notoriety and is being used by many transportation departments across the country to make snow plowing more efficient. Certainly, MoDOT employees are a very talented group when it comes to generating new and better ideas.

The 2010-2011 Innovations Challenge, formerly known as the Tool and Equipment Challenge, drew 46 submissions from across the state. The program was expanded this year to include innovations in processes. Employees were asked to focus their innovations on six emphasis areas directly tied to the Five-Year Direction: mowing, litter pickup, signing, fleet reductions, striping and pavement maintenance.

**The 2010-2011 Innovations Challenge, formerly known as the Tool and Equipment Challenge, drew 46 submissions from across the state.**

"We're all about trying to save money and these new ideas they're coming up with are very impressive," said Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission Chair Grace Nichols. "It not only makes life safer for all of us, but in many instances saves us a lot of money so we're very appreciative of their hard work."

The innovations were rated by both district and central office review teams on cost savings, convenience/ease of use, impact on the Five-Year Direction, and implementation. Sixteen submissions made it to the Innovations Challenge Showcase and were on display at the Spring Maintenance meeting in March.

Taking top honors was the Contrast Striper, created in District 8. The winning team

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# New Time Reporting System

MoDOT is implementing a new Time Reporting System. The new web-based system will interface with SAM II HR but will be easier for employees to use.

The new system will be available to users from any Internet connection 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In addition to collecting time, TRS will provide a single point of entry for data related to the daily activities of maintenance and traffic crews – time, equipment usage, materials usage and performance accomplishments.

"This will enable maintenance and traffic employees to streamline their reporting procedures and save them valuable time," said Director of System Management Don Hillis.

The biggest change for employees will be the requirement to submit weekly timesheets rather than a single timesheet at the end of the pay period. Processing of timesheets more frequently will make it easier for employees and supervisors to keep track of time and improve the accuracy of the data.

Key features of TRS include:

- User friendly – More processing will happen behind the scenes, making time reporting more straightforward than the current SAMII payroll timesheets.
- Security – Social security numbers will not be available. Employees will only see their own timesheet.
- One-Stop-Shop - Maintenance and traffic crews will enter time, material usage, equipment usage and per formance measures on the Crew sheet.
- Leave balances will be available on the time sheet.
- Web-based application is available 24/7 from any location with Internet access.
- More edits to prevent users from entering time incorrectly.
- Built-in leave request available.
- It's simple enough that most users can learn via individual training.

Training manuals will be available, along with online tutorials. District offices will offer additional training as needed.

CONFIDUS Group developed the system which has been successfully implemented at the the Missouri State Highway Patrol and the Missouri Department of Natural Resources. MoDOT worked with CONFIDUS Group to add the maintenance crew reporting feature.

The roll out of the system will occur in phases, with districts and divisions implementing TRS in late summer. Watch for when your district or division will be implemented.

# Innovation

*continued from page 1*

modified an existing striper paint gun carriage so that it could produce a stripe with three independent lines simultaneously – two black and one white lines. This innovation allows maintenance employees to apply contrast markings in one pass along stretches of roadway where daytime visibility is a concern – a much quicker and cheaper way to operate.

In addition to District 8's Contrast Striper, other statewide winners receiving $425 per individual or maximum of $1,550 per team and an extra $10,000 for the district budget, included:

- Belly Plow Extension, District 8 – allows a truck to remove shoulder sod and repair edge ruts without a motor grader;
- Sign Post Straightener, District 8 – straightens twisted sign posts;
- Sign Step, District 8 – attaches directly onto telespar signs, eliminating the need for a ladder;
- Spring Loaded Flags B, District 7 – a gadget that eases the process to raise or lower flags on work signs;
- Trash Bucket, District 9 – a device that keeps trash bags open and workers focused on oncoming traffic.

Regional winners, receiving $75 or a maximum of $450 per team, were:

- Boom Auger, District 7
- Channel Driver, District 10
- Concrete Chute, District 9
- Concrete Form Saddles, District 8
- Litter Platform, District 9
- Sign Post Leveler, District 9
- Sign Base Puller, District 5
- Spring Loaded Flags A, District 9
- Striping Process, District 2
- Tailgate Sign Rack, District 6

More information on the Innovations Challenge and the 2010-11 honorees are available at wwwi/intranet/or/SolutionsAtWork/Innovations.htm. You can also view a video recapping the Challenge at *http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyByg99eQ0U&feature=channel_video_title.*



# Motorcycle vs. Car

*by Sandra Hentges*

In car versus motorcycle crashes, the motorcycle never wins. It is simple physics. A motorcycle provides very little protection to the rider, which in a way, is what people like about riding. It is also one of the reasons that motorcyclists have to be ultra-cautious and motorists need to watch out for motorcycles. May is Motorcycle Awareness Month across the nation.

"Riding a motorcycle makes a trip feel more like a journey by involving a combination of senses, like smelling, feeling, and seeing your surroundings, instead of just getting to your destination while looking through a windshield," says Kathy Shikles, MoDOT executive assistant in Highway Safety.

Cathy Morrison

**May is Motorcycle Awareness Month across the nation.**

Motorcycle awareness advertising and outreach efforts over the summer are designed to encourage motorists to look for motorcycles at all times. Very often, drivers of cars and trucks don't see motorcycles, not until the last second, or sometimes not at all. Motorcycle operators have to anticipate the moves of other drivers and be extra cautious of road-conditions, debris and numerous other hazards.

Motorcycle experts recommend motorcyclists complete some type of training before getting out on the road. There are 26 training locations in the state. You can find the one nearest you at *www.mmsp.org*

Motorcycle use is growing in Missouri, in 2008 there were 332,225 motorcycle operators in Missouri, in 2010 that number had grown to 356,183. Fatalities have jumped around in that same period, going from 108 in 2008 to 84 in 2009 and 90 in 2010. Injuries however are on a steady decline since 2008 to a low of 1,886 in 2010.

# It's Personal

Tina Thurman, motor carrier compliance supervisor, shares her story of how transportation is personal in her life:

"My son Garrett will start kindergarten this fall. As a preschooler, he was diagnosed with Juvenile Diabetes (Type I). Because his body does not produce any insulin, we have to monitor his blood sugar and inject the hormone several times a day.

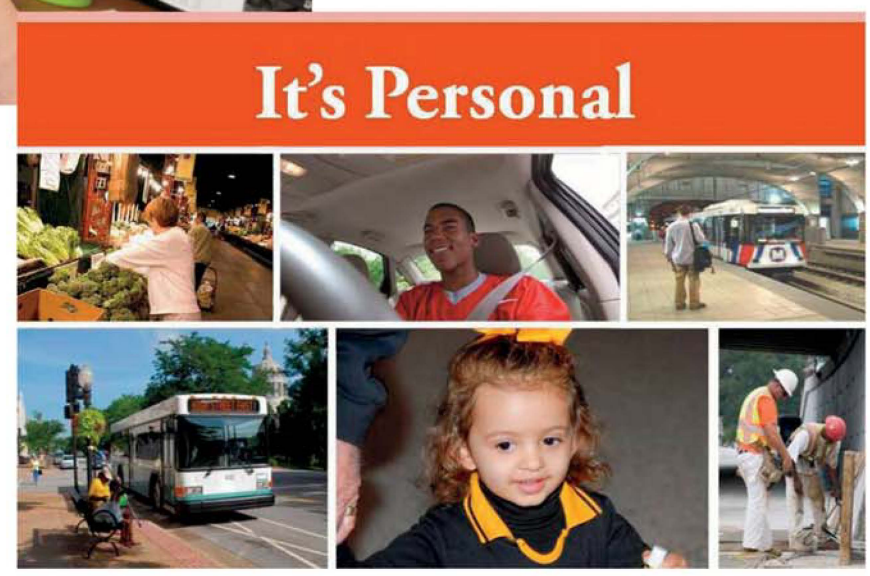
There is no such thing as homemade insulin. I can't make testing supplies or needles. I rely on shipments from far away factories that travel by train and highway to reach my mailbox. And it's not just that the packages arrive, they have to arrive when I need them.

If shipping channels are interrupted, it causes a delay in delivery. I can deal with shortages of gas, bread and milk. Insulin is another story. My brown-eyed live-wire can't live without a safe, reliable transportation system.

For our family, transportation is more than personal. It's a matter of life and death."

**Tina Thurman, motor carrier compliance supervisor, knows transportation is personal to her family.**

How is transportation personal to you? If you would like to share your story, contact Laura Holloway in Community Relations at 573-751-5985 or *Laura.holloway@modot.mo.gov*. For more information on how transportation is personal in Missouri, visit *www.modot.org/itspersonal*.




# Don't Be Stupid – Buckle Up and Arrive Alive

*by Melissa Black*

Imagine jumping from an airplane without a parachute – that would be just stupid. And yet, many Missourians continue to do something even dumber every day – ride unbuckled in their vehicles. MoDOT is implementing new strategies with this year's annual Click It or Ticket campaign to try and convince the 24 percent of unbuckled Missourians to wear their seat belt and Arrive Alive.

"It's time we try some new things in our state to increase seat belt usage," says Kevin Keith, MoDOT director. "Our job is to reduce fatalities and injuries on our roads, and if we can't get more people to buckle up, we're not going to be able to keep them safe."

Seat belt use in Missouri has remained relatively unchanged in the last several years and consistently below the national average. Missouri continues to remain around 76 percent seat belt usage, well below the national average of 85 percent. Missouri's teens and pick-up truck drivers are among those least likely to buckle up at 66 and 61 percent.

Past attempts to enact a primary seat belt law in Missouri have failed, so last fall, MoDOT convened a group of individuals from several groups to come up with new ideas to try and increase Missouri's seat belt usage rate. Some of these ideas included:

- Focus on educating the lowest seat belt usage counties.
- Work with high schools to encourage adoption of a new or stronger seat belt policy.
- Use portable message boards to post messages about fatal unbuckled crashes.
- Find ways to positively reinforce wearing a seat belt.
- Partner with large employers to educate employees about importance of seat belt use.

MoDOT currently is in the process of implementing several of these ideas now, including a new twist on the annual Click It or Ticket campaign that will hopefully help create a culture where seat belt use is the smart decision.

Missouri's annual Click It or Ticket campaign will begin May 23 and continue through June 12. Click It or Ticket is a national campaign designed to increase seat belt use and reduce highway fatalities. The campaign couples high-visibility enforcement with public information and education and paid advertising.

Law enforcement officers will be cracking down on motorists who aren't wearing seat belts, and other national advertising spots will send a strong message about the benefits of wearing a seat belt and the consequences if you don't.

One-hundred and eighty two law enforcement agencies participated in Click It or Ticket in 2010. Their efforts netted 5,794 seat belt and 219 child seat violations. During the campaign, law enforcement also issued 7,556 speeding violations and made 207 DWI, 96 felony and 183 drug arrests. In total, law enforcement made 27,072 stops during the campaign and issued 22,395 citations.

"It only takes three seconds to put a seat belt on, and it can be the difference between life and death," said Leanna Depue, MoDOT director of Highway Safety. "There are lots of excuses people give for not buckling up – but there just aren't any good ones when you know seat belts can save your life."

Seven out of 10 Missourians killed in 2010 traffic crashes were unbuckled. For more info, visit *www.saveMOlives.com*.

# For Your Benefit

## Employee Assistance Program Reaches Out with Helping Hand

*by Matt Hiebert*

We need to talk.

It might be about family issues, it might be about work, it might be about a problem too big for you to handle alone. Whatever the reason, you have someone who will listen.

The Employee Assistance Program is a free service that helps MoDOT employees deal with the realities life deals us. The program is run by the Magellan Health Services and can be accessed 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by calling (800) 808-2261 or visiting *www.magellanhealth.com/member.*

EAP is a voluntary, prepaid confidential program that provides counseling and referral services for employees and their families. Counselors are experienced in providing support and guidance for a broad range of needs, including:

- Stress
- Family or parenting issues
- Chemical dependencies
- Marital or relationship issues
- Adjusting to change
- Self-improvement
- Child and elder care
- Pre and postnatal concerns
- Grief
- Work/life balance

And remember, the problem doesn't have to be at a crisis level to call. You may just need a bit of understanding and guidance.

All of us have had to deal with one of those topics at some point in our lives, whether for ourselves or a family member. If you need a hand with a problem, reach out and take theirs. EAP can make a difference.

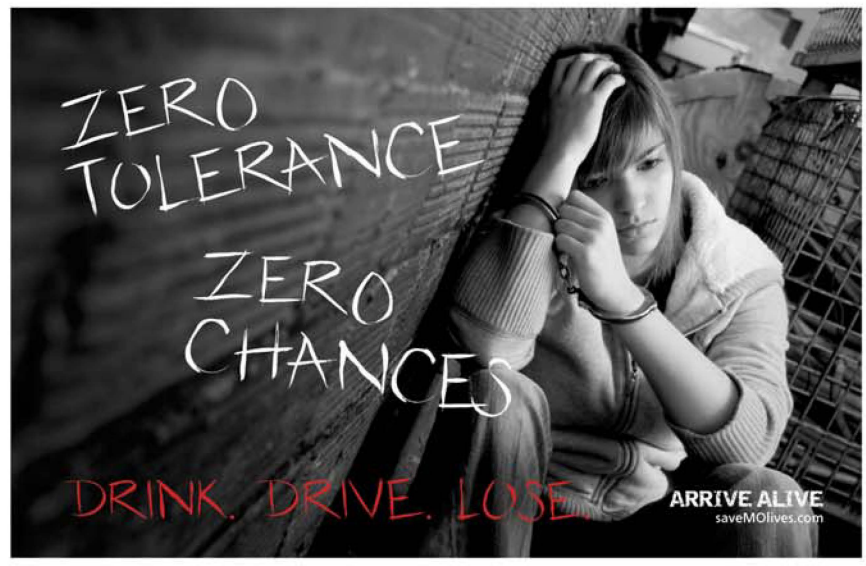
# Zero Tolerance. Zero Chances.

For youth, getting your license is a rite of passage. It's something you look forward to for months, even years leading up to your sixteenth birthday. With a license comes freedom, fun, and friends. But what many youth seem to forget is that it also comes with responsibility.

That new license isn't a right; it's a privilege. And it comes with strings attached. One of those strings is don't drink and drive.

Underage drinking is not new. The fact that it's illegal for those under 21 just adds to the allure. Youth make up a significant portion of drunk drivers causing traffic crashes on Missouri roadways. Over the last three years (2008-2010), there were 90 fatal crashes and 276 disabling injury crashes involving a driver under 21.

With prom and graduation season right around the corner, the Missouri Coalition for Roadway Safety is reminding youth to celebrate safe and sober. From May 4-13, high-visibility enforcement and education will send a strong message to all teens and parents that underage drinking is not only wrong – it's against the law.




Missouri has a zero tolerance law. If you are under 21, your license will be suspended if you're caught driving with even a trace of alcohol in your system.

Drinking and driving is not worth the risk. Zero tolerance means zero chances. Visit *saveMOlives.com*. Buckle Up and Arrive Alive.

## May Service Anniversaries

**35 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| Dennis E. Pollard | D2 |
| Jeffrey L. Bailey | D4 |

**30 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| Russell A. Mitchell | D2 |
| David B. Morris | D5 |

**25 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| Larry H. Parsons | D1 |
| Michael E. McGrath | D2 |
| Thomas P. Batenhorst | D3 |
| Harvey D. Lewis | D3 |
| James C. Burgess | D4 |
| Brian S. Ziegler | D4 |
| Marlin W. Gessling | D5 |
| Robert E. Hesemann | D5 |
| Willa B. Drake | D7 |
| Walter R. Headrick | D7 |
| Bernie J. Mac | D8 |
| Deborah R. Strobel | D10 |
| Jay W. Trammell | D10 |
| Dwight D. Vaughn | D10 |
| Ricky D. Branum | D10 |
| Kelly D. Lucas | CO |

**20 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| David S. Corbin | D1 |
| Douglas A. Pettig | D2 |
| Larry D. Wells | D2 |
| William D. Basler | D2 |
| David L. Deitch | D2 |
| Roger W. Reger | D2 |
| Darren L. Apperson | D5 |
| James J. James | D5 |
| Gary S. Townsend | D5 |
| Eric V. Ingrum | D6 |
| Matthew N. Jansson | D6 |
| Bruce E. Staley | D6 |
| John L. Davis | D10 |
| Terry J. Walker | D10 |
| Randy R. Gholson | D10 |
| Jeffrey S. Byrge | D10 |
| Debbie J. Foster | D10 |
| Shannon W. Inman | D10 |
| Johnny L. Aldridge | D10 |
| Helen M. Grindstaff | D10 |
| Kent W. Nelson | CO |
| Brent P. Fischer | CO |
| Jay Bestgen | CO |
| Kenneth E. Barnett | CO |

**15 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| John E. Cool | D1 |
| Kevin C. James | D2 |
| Darin R. Epperson | D3 |
| Anthony G. Grote | D3 |
| Richard A. Hyde | D3 |
| Jody B. Geisendorfer | D3 |
| Macy J. Rodenbaugh | D3 |
| David L. Johnson | D4 |
| Regina R. Shipley | D4 |
| Pamela L. Nugent | D4 |
| Kenneth A. Cherry | D6 |
| Claude A. Brown | D7 |
| Twyla K. Harper | D7 |
| Dennis J. Greenfield | D7 |
| Robert L. Cunningham | D9 |
| Joshua Wessel | D10 |
| Steve B. Limbaugh | D10 |
| Melanie L. Wilson | CO |
| Llans E. Taylor | CO |
| Michael A. Donahoe | CO |

**10 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| Wendell D. Willis | D2 |
| Deloris K. Goetz | D4 |
| Daniel D. Allred | D4 |
| Bryan S. Gregory | D5 |
| Corey J. Duemmel | D5 |
| Jerry D. Lacey | D6 |
| Anthony J. Cohill | D6 |
| Tyson K. Watson | D6 |
| Kristina T. Coppinger | D6 |
| Robin L. Livesay | D6 |
| Tim A. Huskey | D6 |
| Daniel W. Savageau | D6 |
| Toby J. Kemper | D6 |
| Darrel L. Arnold | D7 |
| Jeffrey R. Kaiser | D7 |
| Randall E. Aulbur | D7 |
| Brent C. Banes | D7 |
| Carl G. Jackson | D8 |
| Michael R. Nelson | D8 |
| Gary A. McLarry | D8 |
| Travis J. Slayton | D10 |
| John F. Mehuys | CO |
| Karen L. Daniels | CO |
| Amy M. Niederhelm | CO |
| Debra L. Stieffermann | CO |
| Paul J. Imhoff | CO |
| Kenyon R. Warbritton | CO |
| Michael R. Meyerhoff | CO |

**5 Years**

| | |
|---|---|
| Brandon A. Gillette | D1 |
| Jason G. Baldwin | D1 |
| Brett D. Newton | D2 |
| Michael L. Wood | D2 |
| Ryan M. Littleton | D2 |
| Johnnie L. Kinnison | D2 |
| Jeffrey A. Wilson | D2 |
| James S. Vonburg | D2 |
| Melanie D. Mayes | D3 |
| Robert L. Johnston | D3 |
| Debora S. Redel | D5 |
| Lawrence W. Lewis | D5 |
| Christopher J. Fulk | D5 |
| Robert K. Godbey | D6 |
| Martin D. Connell | D6 |
| Lori L. Marble | D7 |
| Donald W. Goodall | D8 |
| Willie J. Jones | D10 |
| Robert B. Dodd | D10 |
| Thomas N. Taegtmeyer | D10 |
| Charles D. Rose | D10 |
| Karen B. Douglas | CO |
| Ciara N. Harden | CO |
| Alex Egharevba | CO |

## March Retirements

| Name | Location | Years of Service |
|---|---|---|
| David Dennis | D2 | 26 |
| Edmond Leivian | D2 | 40 |
| George Clarke | D3 | 36 |
| Linda Clark | D4 | 28 |
| Carl Bradley | D4 | 28 |
| Michael Bragg | D6 | 18 |
| Robert Sudholt | D6 | 27 |
| Philip Ferkel | D6 | 34 |
| Roy Branson | D6 | 41 |
| Stephen Cochran | D7 | 17 |
| Marquis Baxter | D7 | 40 |
| Larry Woodruff | D9 | 26 |
| Mary Hunton | CO | 14 |
| Sheri Prewett | CO | 14 |
| Andrew Rothove | CO | 15 |
| Freddie Johnson | CO | 25 |
| Arnold Edgar | CO | 14 |

## In Memoriam

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Orville Johnson | D4 | Mar. 2 |
| Howard Sherlock | D1 | Mar. 2 |
| August Meseberg | D1 | Mar. 11 |
| Carl Sassmann | D5 | Mar. 11 |
| Robert Gorham | D3 | Mar. 13 |
| George Kriegh | D4 | Mar. 14 |
| Cornelius Lock | CO | Mar. 18 |
| Michael Russo | D6 | Mar. 18 |
| Charles Boylan | D6 | Mar. 21 |
| Raymond Scheib | D2 | Mar. 21 |
| Monte Stiegman | D3 | Mar. 23 |
| Robert Salzman | D5 | Mar. 25 |
| Geraldine Akin | D9 | Mar. 26 |
| Henry Miller | D10 | Mar. 28 |
| Gerald Coleman | D6 | Mar. 29 |
| Joseph Sabatino | D6 | Mar. 30 |
| Lyle Dickison | D9 | Mar. 30 |

The following former Commissioner passed away:

| | |
|---|---|
| Marjorie Shramm | Mar. 17 |

CO Central Office

# Earth Day Teaches Little Changes Can Mean Big Results

*by Melissa Black*

MoDOT volunteers did their part recently to help educate thousands of kids, students, teachers and parents who came to the Capitol in Jefferson City April 29 to learn about protecting the environment. The Department of Natural Resources hosted the 17th annual Earth Day celebration from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Missouri State Capitol south lawn.

"Little Changes, Big Results" was the winning slogan in DNR's 2011 Earth Day slogan contest. Adeline Forester, a fifth-grade student in Michelle Kemker's class at the Cole R5 Eugene Elementary School, submitted the winning slogan.

"Adeline's message reminds everyone it is the little things we do every day that make a difference to protect Missouri's resources," said Sara Parker Pauley, DNR director. "Little changes can give big results that improve our environment and our communities."

MoDOT is one of the many state agencies that teamed up with DNR to educate visitors about the environment. Activities include information booths, games and displays about the environment.

"This event is one of the many ways we educate children and adults about what we can all do to take care of and preserve the environment," said Don Hillis, director of System Management.

MoDOT workers from Central Office and District 5 educated visitors about a variety of ways they could help the environment. Besides reminding everyone about the importance of picking up trash, staff went a step further and asked for a promise to not throw trash out in the first place by signing the Litter Pledge.

In addition, visitors to the MoDOT tent had the opportunity to learn more about the Adopt-A-Highway and No MOre Trash! programs. Everyone coming by the booth also received a state map, some cool temporary Peanut the Turtle tattoos, mood pencils, car trash bags, and the ever-popular small white pine trees. MoDOT staff handed out more than 3,000 of these trees to Earth Day participants.

Cathy Morrison

**At the Earth Day celebration, students signed the Litter Pledge where they promise to keep trash in its place.**

The nation's very first Earth Day was held in 1970 and led to the creation of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The official date of the national Earth Day celebration is April 22.

# Central Office's Biggest Losers

Thanks to Andrew Williford, structural designer in Bridge, 21 people in the Bridge Division are a little lighter these days –209 pounds lighter.

Williford put together a weight loss competition for Bridge employees called the "Dead Load Reduction Challenge" (in the Bridge world, a dead load is a term used to describe the load caused by a structure's own weight). The competition ran for eight weeks, starting Jan. 10 and ending March 7.

The 21 participants competed in two separate competitions - one for the individual with the highest percentage of weight loss and one for the team with the highest percentage of weight loss. The 21 employees lost a combined 209 pounds over the eight-week challenge. The winning team, comprised of Structural Project Manager Dan Smith and Senior Structural Designers Gennadiy Ivanov and Al Shawn, lost a combined 47 pounds. Ivanov led the team and won the individual competition, losing 22.8 pounds and 12.17 percent of his total body weight.

Shaun Schmitz

**Gennadiy Ivanov, Al Shawn and Dan Smith**

# Excellence in Financial Reporting

For the third year running, three Financial Services staff members in the Controller's Office have received the highest form of recognition in governmental accounting and financial reporting.

MoDOT received a Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the comprehensive annual financial report it prepared for the Missouri Transportation Finance Corporation. The award is giving by the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada.

Financial Services Manager Bev Schepers and Senior Financial Services Specialists Christina Wilkerson and Mary Sue Fontana prepared the MTFC's financial statements for the end of fiscal year 2010. Their ability to demonstrate a constructive "spirit of full disclosure" to clearly communicate the organization's finances helped them win the prestigious award for the third year in a row.

Shaun Schmitz

**Pictured above is Senior Financial Services Specialist Christina Wilkerson. Honorees not pictured are Financial Services Manager Bev Schepers and Senior Financial Services Specialist Mary Sue Fontana.**

"These three individuals take great pride in their work and this award truly recognizes their dedication in ensuring the Department's and the MTFC's financial statements are the 'top of the line'," said Debbie Rickard, controller.

## for more info

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# D1 Northwest

## Battle of the Belt

*by M. Elaine Justus*

M. Elaine Justus

**Osborn High School was the first place "gold" winner in the Northwest District. A tiny school, Osborn's final survey of 15 drivers recorded all 15 were buckled up. They were presented with the gold banner and a check for $350 which they will use for student development activities.**

Holly L. Murphy

**Another small school, North Nodaway Jr.-Sr. High, was awarded the "Most Improved" award of $350 for increasing the number of belted drivers from 12 to 22.**

## Transportation Day

*by M. Elaine Justus*

Holly L. Murphy

**Horace Mann Elementary School hosted a Transportation Day. Maintenance Supervisor Travis Burns, from Maryville, was there to show off our snowblower.**

School sponsored events are a great opportunity to explain to the next generation who MoDOT is, what we actually do, and what we do it with. When Horace Mann Elementary School in Maryville invited us to join the display, we were more than happy to "show off." The snowblower was a big hit along with RV's, fire trucks, ambulances, motorcycles, and various farm implements.

Holly L. Murphy

**We learned you need to be very careful when you ask children to smile for the camera.**

### for more info

Community Relations Manager — Elaine Justus
Phone — 816.387.2353
E-mail — margaret.justus@modot.mo.gov

3602 N. Belt Highway
St. Joseph, MO 64506-1399

## Welcome Center Featured

*by M. Elaine Justus*

**In 2009, the glass tile mosaic was dedicated at the Eagleville Welcome Center on Interstate 35. It was featured in the April issue of *Rural Missouri* magazine.**

The *Rural Missouri* magazine is published monthly by the Association of Missouri Electric Cooperatives and distributed throughout the state of Missouri. They have been in publication since 1948. Their goal is to bring entertaining features and informative articles to more than 500,000 members of Missouri's electric co-ops. "Our pages are filled with fascinating people and businesses as well as interesting places to visit. We'll share our state's vast history and provide glimpses into the future."

The April 2011 issue features an article by staff writer Heather Berry. She interviewed the artist (who lives in Lynden, Washington), Mike Murray of the Missouri Division of Tourism, and MoDOT about the artwork.

Although the article is titled, "Prairie Passage Pit Stop" even the author was surprised to learn that the mural has become a destination in itself. To quote one traveler, "It's an awe-inspiring thing."

## No MOre Trash

*by M. Elaine Justus*

No MOre Trash! Bash month is an extra special event this year in the Northwest District. Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator Marcia Johnson contacted several other agencies in our area who offer "adoption" opportunities and invited them to join us in the month-long celebration and recruitment effort.

Besides the Missouri Department of Conservation's Stream Team, several agencies from the City of St. Joseph decided to also participate: the Adopt-A-Street Program; the Adopt-A-Parkway Program; the Water Protection District; and the newly-constructed Recycling Center.

"No MOre Trash! seemed like a great opportunity to bring everyone together to let potential adopters know what options were open to them," said Ms. Johnson. "I'm thrilled that so many people want to get involved, and we all plan to make it an even bigger event next year. We are finding so many ways we can make this exciting."

The month-long effort will culminate in an Earth Day inspired event on April 30. The City of St. Joseph is sponsoring a "Household Hazardous Waste Collection" to remove common household materials that could contaminate the environment: oil, antifreeze, pesticides, paints, etc. All of our "Adoption" partners will be there to distribute information about other earth-friendly programs, and how we can all get involved and make a difference.

Holly L. Murphy

**On April 8, the employees of the Northwest District suffered the cold, windy weather to pick up trash along our adopted section of U.S. 169. Among the "treasures" they found were one boot and a jumbo-sized fake $50 bill.**

# D2 NorthCentral

## Keeping Our Commitment

*by Tammy Wallace*

A commitment made to our customers last November was realized in March when the Route A Bridge in Grundy County opened to traffic.

The bridge closed on Sept. 22, 2010 after debris from heavy flooding washed the center pier away from under the bridge.

When the bridge closed, MoDOT staff immediately began preliminary engineering and selected a consultant to design the replacement structure so that bids could be accepted for construction. To expedite the start of construction the Missouri Highways and Transportation Commission granted approval of the contract award by electronic ballot rather than waiting until their next scheduled meeting.

Phillips Grading & Construction Company was awarded the emergency bridge replacement contract at a cost of nearly $1.3 million; work began on Dec. 6 and continued through the winter. The contract included a provision that required the contractor to have the bridge open to traffic by March 31, 2011 to avoid liquidated damages.

"Completing a bridge of this size in less than four months during the winter was a real challenge, said District Construction Engineer Dennis Brucks. "The contractor had to work in extreme elements and take measures to protect each concrete pour from freezing temperatures. We were fortunate to have a contractor such as Phillips Grading that was capable of meeting our commitment to have this bridge back open by March 31."

Above, the damaged bridge with a noticeable swag where the pier was washed away. Below, the newly completed bride is straight as an arrow.

Brucks said he not only appreciates the contractor's diligence to meet this deadline, but also the patience and support of the motorists who took alternate routes during this closure.

A bonus came in April with word that federal funding was granted to help offset the cost of construction. Missouri was awarded over $7 million in federal disaster relief funding for roadways affected by flooding in several counties, including Grundy.

Video and photos available on the district's website.

## Full Swing in Spring

The Alternate Route 63 project was back in full swing with a bridge deck pour early this spring. The project will construct 8.5 miles of super two lane roadway to the east of Kirksville and will be opened to traffic by the end of the year.

The bridge deck pour on the north end of the project took place in March.

Because the majority of the project is not visible to our customers, in February a web cam was installed near the south end of the project where the Alternate Route will connect to the existing U.S. 63.

The web cam, linked to the district's web site, will be a fun way for Kirksville residents and anyone interested in the project to watch real-time progress of the bridge construction this year. The web cam archives the photo images so you can look back on any given day.

Throughout the construction videos and photos will be taken and added to the web. To view the web cam, a recent video of a deck pour on the north end of the project, photos and more, visit *http://www.modot.mo.gov/northcentral/alternaterte63.htm*.

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## Teaming Up for April Events

April is the time to pick up trash and emphasize work zone awareness, so the district organized with other agencies and groups to focus on these two special events.

MoDOT maintenance forces also joined in by handing out bags at restaurants and convenience stores in their areas during the month..

Above, MDC staff helped hand out nearly 300 bags during the No MOre Trash! Bash event.

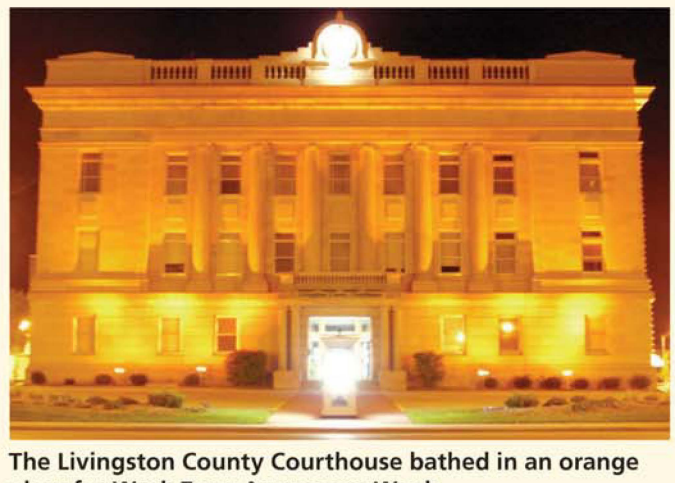
Work Zone Awareness received attention as the district office, MSHP Troop B Headquarters and seven county courthouses joined the "Go Orange" campaign lighting their facilities orange for the week.

Traffic Engineer Steve Barteau joined Sergeant Brent Bernhardt in a work zone on U.S. 36 to interview with a local TV station regarding the importance of work zone safety.

Video of the work zone interview and of a passenger's view while riding in a vehicle through the work zone on U.S. 36 can be found on the district's web site.

For No MOre Trash! Bash district employees teamed with the Missouri Department of Conservation to hand out trash bags and information at fast food restaurants in Kirksville.

During the Bash the Kirksville Rotary Club picked up litter on their adopted section of roadway in the same area.



The Livingston County Courthouse bathed in an orange glow for Work Zone Awareness Week.

# D3 Northeast

## Work Zone

If you're driving through northeast Missouri anytime soon, you might see a couple of billboards with an unusual catch phrase. "Are YOU A Zone Head?" It should catch your attention because of the children wearing cone hats. "This was just one way for us to help the public become aware of the importance of paying attention and driving slowly through work zones," said District Engineer Paula Gough. "Schools, banks, convenience stores, the MoDOT team, highway patrol, media ... they all helped us get the word out that work zone season is here," she added.

As Work Zone Awareness Week came to an end, a few moments were taken to remember those employees who lost their lives while on the job. NE District Engineer Paula Gough places flowers near the memorial stone at the district office.

Nursing students at Hannibal Regional Hospital play the online work zone safety game at a display which was set up for the week in the hospital lobby.

(Above right) There are three billboards and one digital billboard that were donated along U.S. 36 and 61 to share the message. (Right) Frankford Elementary students were featured on two of the billboards and on the web page.

Sgt. Brent Bernhardt and the Missouri State Highway Patrol slowed drivers down in a work zone and participated in a press conference.

Hannibal Maintenance Supervisor Rich Arnold is interviewed by a local television station while his crews pothole along U.S. 61 in Hannibal.

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# Around the District

Jerry Toland, maintenance supervisor at Center, was one of 36 employees who generously gave the gift of life last month during a MoDOT blood drive with the American Red Cross. A total of 41 units of blood was donated.

Christmas came a little early this year as Lincoln County Health Department received a shipment of car seats and shared them with MoDOT to use at its safety checks throughout the year.

Hannibal High School Principal Ryan Sharkey reiterates the importance of not drinking and driving during a pre-prom assembly last month. The featured speaker, pictured in the background, was Phaedra Mariott-Olsen, Miss Wheelchair USA and a victim of a drunk driver.

## Calling in the Yard

*by Chris Shulse*

Last fall, Roadside Operations staff constructed two small shallow wetlands on the north side of the district office near the edge of the woods. The wetlands were constructed to benefit the wildlife that use the yard and specifically for western chorus frogs that attempted to reproduce in the shallow swales that formerly occupied the locations where the wetlands were built. The swales didn't hold water for long so any eggs the frogs laid quickly died when the swales dried.

The new wetlands are designed to hold water into mid or late summer before drying out. This will allow the frogs to successfully reproduce while preventing predatory aquatic insects from reaching high levels. The frogs have found the wetlands and have been calling loudly during the recent warm weather.

Tracks of deer, opossum, raccoon, turkey, and other birds have been noticed around the wetlands indicating that other wildlife are using the wetlands.

Many frog species require both aquatic habitat to reproduce and good quality upland habitat nearby to spend most of their lives.

The western chorus frogs may be loud, but they are very difficult to see as they are only about an inch long. They will stay in the wetlands for a month or so and then spend the rest of the year in the grass, wildflowers, and woods surrounding the wetlands. They are close relatives of spring peepers.

D4

KansasCityArea

# Scout Manager Honored By KC Chamber of Commerce

*by Gina Myles*

E. Jason Sims, manager of Kansas City Scout, was honored by the Kansas City Chamber of Commerce with its Ace Award. The award honors the unsung heroes of the business world, culturally diverse mid-to-senior level managers who are achieving excellence and having an impact that exceeds expectation for their company's bottom line. The award was presented to Mr. Sims on April 12 at the inaugural 2011 Ace Award Breakfast Ceremony held at the Hyatt Regency Crown Center in Kansas City, Mo.

Mr. Sims was one of five honorees selected from a pool of over 50 nominees. The other honorees included Kevin Evans of the KCMO Parks and Recreation Department, William Fulbright of Ameristar Casino Hotel Kansas City, Liping Liu of Deloitte Tax LLP and Vaibhaviben Thaker of St. Luke's Northland Hospital.

The Kansas City Chamber of Commerce is a champion for diversity in thought, action, and talent and the Ace Award was designed to celebrate this talent. The award recipients impact their organization's success by impacting the bottom line, impact workplace culture through a positive attitude and influence on others and demonstrate leadership by upholding organization's core values and promote innovation.

Under Mr. Sims' management, Kansas City Scout embodies both the Missouri and Kansas Departments of Transportation core values of workplace diversity. Scout is dedicated to providing a world class transportation experience and making a significant impact on the lives of those who use and support transportation. His ability to demonstrate his commitment to the development, growth and promotion of women, minorities and qualified candidates in the transportation industry is a direct reflection of MoDOT's foundation of employing a workforce that reflects the customers, communities and cultures it serves.

Jason Sims, manager of KC Scout, with award from the KC Chamber of Commerce.

# It's a Bash! Trash Bash, That Is

*by Kerri Lewis*

It was a beautiful, sunny afternoon on April 6 when D4 employees sported safety vests to tackle a trashy problem. The district hosted a district-wide pickup to kick off the 2011 No MOre Trash! Bash. Maintenance facilities from across the district took the time to work along various areas across the district to cleanup some of the roads needing attention. Even adopters could be spotted filling up the bright yellow trash bags to help spread the word about putting litter in its place.

Even the district office got involved. More than 25 employees from the DO spent a couple hours cleaning up trash along I-470 just a few miles from the office. Across the district, employees collected more than 350 bags of trash, and the word spread quickly. Several news stations were eager to report the trash bash and even arrived on scene to catch a glimpse of the yellow bags and orange vests. The message is clear, MoDOT likes to put trash in its place, but prefers it gets put there in the first place.

Even little hands became involved in the Bash.

Trash collected by the Nashua Maintenance crew after a cleanup for a No MOre Trash! Bash event.

A cleaner I-29 after crews put trash in its place.

## for more info

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# D5 Central

## Bridge Attachment Celebration Attracts Big Crowd

*by Holly Dentner*

Almost 300 people gathered near the banks of the Missouri River in Jefferson City to celebrate the completion of a new bicycle and pedestrian attachment for the U.S. 54 northbound/U.S. 63 eastbound Missouri River Bridge.

Shaun Schmitz

State and local officials cut the ribbon to celebrate the new bridge attachment on April 8.

The ribbon-cutting ceremony for the new bridge attachment was held on April 8, almost a year after work on the $6.7 million project began. In addition to state and local officials, the ceremony attracted lots of local residents eager to be one of the first to cross the Missouri River using the new structure.

While the bridge attachment will improve safety and enhance the area's overall transportation system, many who attended the ceremony were pleased to finally have a connection from the Katy Trail into Jefferson City.

Holly Dentner

The surface of the bridge attachment is made of fiber-reinforced polymer decking that was bolted to the bridge beams in four-foot sections.

The pathway is eight feet wide and includes two lookout points with a view of the Missouri State Capitol. A ramp structure on the north side of the river allows access to the trailhead.

Prior to construction, bicyclists and pedestrians could only cross the bridge by using the shoulder of the three lane eastbound/northbound bridge. The attachment gives those who walk or cycle across the bridge a space separate from the cars and trucks traveling at highway speeds.

MoDOT partnered with the Missouri Department of Natural Resources, the City of Jefferson, and the Missouri State Parks Foundation to construct the bridge attachment.

Shaun Schmitz

Leroy Heman and his daughter, Jennifer, had a good view of downtown Jefferson City from the attachment, which is located on the downstream side of the bridge.

### for more info

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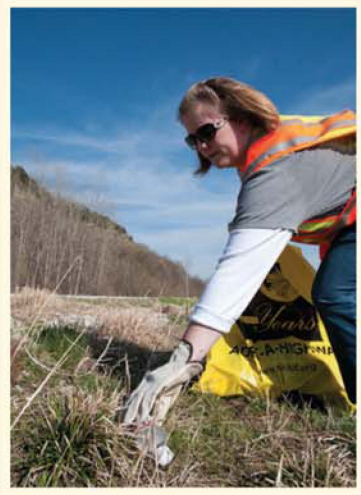
## Around the District

Cathy Morrison

Maintenance workers Francisco Bejarano and Patrick Wulff replace a section of concrete on U.S. 50 in Cole County during Work Zone Awareness Week in April.

Kerry Thompson

Work Zone Safety Mascot Barrel Bob spent a few days in early April hanging out at the I-70 rest area in Boonville.


Shaun Schmitz

Senior Community Relations Specialist Holly Dentner picks up trash during the district's Adopt-A-Highway litter clean-up on April 6.

Shaun Schmitz

Transportation Project Designer Laurie Wyrick races to pick up trash left behind by "Ima Litterbug," the district's new litter prevention mascot.

Kristin Gerber

Senior Highway Designer Mattheuw Prenger and Traffic Operations Engineer Jacob Ray explain the details of the new U.S. 63 interchange at Route H in Boone County. A public hearing to discuss the project was held on March 22.

Dianna Johnson

Dianna Johnson

The Central Region Coalition for Roadway Safety presented awards in late March to the region's 2010 Battle of the Belt winners. Eugene High School (on left) had the highest percentage of students wearing their safety belts, at 96.1 percent. St. Elizabeth High School (on right) had the most improved seat belt usage, with an increase of 41.6 percent more students buckling up at the end of the competition.

# D6 St. Louis Area

## District 6 Goes Above and Beyond to Kick Off No MOre Trash! Bash 2011

*by Kara Price*

Several transportation partners went "green" this April to make Missouri beautiful during the annual No MOre Trash! Bash. MoDOT officials, local elected officials, community partners and law enforcement kicked off the "green" efforts by picking up trash at several different areas throughout the St. Louis metropolitan area, including downtown St. Louis, St. Charles, Hazelwood, St. Clair and Barnhart. These partners stressed for St. Louis area residents to take a few hours and join them in efforts to clean up Missouri and work toward a litter-free state. These events are part of the month-long, 2011 No MOre Trash! Bash sponsored by the Missouri Departments of Transportation and Conservation. During the entire month of April, efforts are aimed at getting people to clean up litter all across Missouri from roadsides to parks, rivers and streams.

**Employees at the St. Charles maintenance building showed teamwork to put together an eye-catching trash display for the St. Charles kickoff event to show the never-ending amount of trash that litters Missouri's highways.**

Every year, each district is encouraged to start the Bash by hosting a cleanup/kickoff event and to invite all local media to garner as much awareness and attention for our litter-prevention efforts as possible.

District 6 went above and beyond with hosting five bash events that attracted media attention all over the district, including newspapers, television, radio and online news sources. A variety of local elected officials participated in the events, including representatives from Sen. Claire McCaskill's office, presiding county commissioners and mayors of the cities where the bashes were held. Several Adopt-A-Highway volunteers took time out of their busy schedules to participate in the events, in addition to their volunteer efforts.

**Chris Hannar, MoDOT maintenance superintendent for St. Charles County, emphasizes how much trash can fit into one seven foot trash bag.**

**Peanut the Turtle and Dan Zarlenga, of the Missouri Department of Conservation, were keynote speakers discussing how litter badly affected Peanut's life.**

The Missouri Department of Conservation brought Peanut the Turtle to the St. Charles trash bash and discussed how litter badly affected her life. The red-eared turtle had gotten stuck in a plastic ring from a six-pack that someone had thrown on the ground instead of in a trashcan. The ring got hung around her shell. About five years passed and the turtle grew but the ring did not. Eventually, her shell grew around the ring but stayed small where it was wrapped around her. Finally, someone found Peanut and took her to the zoo in St. Louis where the ring was cut off. They named her Peanut because of the shape of her shell and gave her to the Missouri Department of Conservation where she now lives and is doing well.

For more information about the Bash and how you can do your part, visit nomoretrash.org.

**Local elected officials, Adopt-A-Highway volunteers and MoDOT employees gathered to participate in the Jefferson County trash bash by picking up litter near Interstate 55.**

**Carolyn Smith, Adopt-A-Highway Coordinator, is interviewed about the trash bash efforts and the significance of the Adopt-A-Highway program.**

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# D7 Southwest

## Students Surprised with Seat Belt Checks

*by Wendy Brunner-Lewis*

Being "caught" was a good thing at two area high schools in mid-April when MoDOT conducted surprise seat belt checks. Students caught wearing their seat belts received rewards for their efforts.

"The ultimate reward, of course, is a life saved," said Tamara Black with District 7's Coalition for Roadway Safety. "But students who were observed wearing their seat belts received coupons for free food, drinks and products."

Donations came from Walmart, Chic-Fil-A, Backyard Burgers, Carousel Park, Sonic, Taco Bell, McDonald's, Southwest Missouri Bank, CiCi's Pizza, Gusano's Pizza, Sam's Club, Bamboo Gardens of Webb City, Wendy's, Steak n' Shake, Carl Richards' Bowl, Rangeline Golf, Big Daddy's Gas N Snack, People's Bank of Seneca and Dairy Queen.

Members of MADD, the Joplin Police Department, Missouri State Highway Patrol and MoDOT provided the volunteers for Joplin High School's surprise seat belt check April 13. Ninety percent of students had their seat belts on during the check.

ARRIVE ALIVE
saveMOlives.com

Employees with the Alliance of Southwest Missouri provided the volunteers for the April 15 check at Seneca High School. Only 55 percent of Seneca students wore their seat belts during the surprise check.

"Sixty-six percent of Missouri teens wear their seat belts," Black said. "The more teens who buckle up, the more young lives are saved."

## Jordon's Innovation One of Top Six in the State

*by Wendy Brunner-Lewis*

Wendy Brunner-Lewis

**Commissioner Rudy Farber, left, and Gary Sanders, center, listens as Lonnie Jordon explains his idea.**

The spring detent for work zone signs didn't win Lonnie Jordon of Concrete South the top prize at the Innovations Challenge Showcase in Springfield, but it was one of the top six contenders. Lonnie earned $10,000 for his work area, which was Longview at the time he submitted his idea.

### for more info

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## Work Around the District

Brad Gripka

**The Barton County Route 126 bridge over the Little North Fork of Spring River is slated to reopen in late June.**

Brad Gripka

**The Jasper County Route D bridge over Dry Branch Creek should reopen in mid-May.**

Tim Lee

**Carthage Senior Maintenance Worker Mitch Landes repairs cracks on Route 71 south of Carthage.**

Kristi Bachman

**Sarcoxie Maintenance Worker Tim Wasson clears brush on the south side of I-44 in Newton County.**

# D8 Springfield Area

## TMC of the Ozarks Open for Business

*by Bob Edwards*

The new Transportation Management Center of the Ozarks, dedicated in April, will enable MoDOT and Springfield traffic engineers to improve traffic flow and respond quicker to incidents along major streets and highways in Springfield and along I-44 through the region.

The project is the latest in a long line of partnership projects involving District 8 and the city of Springfield. The center is located on the Springfield Public Works complex on West Chestnut Expressway.

Chief Engineer Dave Nichols and District Engineer Kirk Juranas participated in the dedication ceremony.

The 11,500-square-foot facility was built and equipped for $3.2 million, with half of that cost coming from federal earmarks and the other half coming from state and local funds. Construction began in January 2010. The state-city traffic management operation has occupied rented space since 1998.

The new TMC is anticipated to earn Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Gold Certification based on "green" building design and construction elements.

Initially, the center will provide real-time oversight of the joint MoDOT/ Springfield signal system -- 250 traffic signals and 42 traffic-monitoring cameras. Included are seven cameras positioned along I-44 in Greene, Webster and Laclede counties.

The facility is designed to expand to manage signals in other communities who choose to become a TMC partner.

The new TMC also is the nerve center for the Advanced Traffic Management System under construction. This project includes installing 27 additional traffic-monitoring cameras, 16 permanently-mounted electronic message signs and 32 traffic detection locations, all located along major City and MoDOT arterials and freeways.

Bob Edwards

**1. MoDOT Traffic Systems Operator Carrie Fodge on duty at her TMC console.**

**2. Traffic Operations Engineer Adam Humphrey guides visitors on a tour.**

**3. MoDOT, Springfield and Federal Highway officials cut a ribbon at the TMC dedication April 13.**

**4. Family portrait: MoDOT-City of Springfield staff of the TMC of the Ozarks.**

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Bob Edwards

**Striping Senior Maintenance Worker Doyle Clement**

## Best Innovation: Contrast Striping

*by Angela Eden*

District 8 took "Best in Show" and three other awards at MoDOT's statewide 2010-2011 Innovations Challenge Showcase held in Springfield in March.

The Innovations Challenge invites MoDOT employees to share inventions and adaptations that can improve efficiency and safety and reduce costs.

"These folks know their jobs," Director of System Management Don Hillis said. "Real innovation starts with them. ... The real benefit goes to the taxpayers because of the savings."

Initially, 42 entries were submitted by MoDOT crews statewide. Sixteen finalists were chosen to compete at the Innovations Challenge. District 8 had five entries in the contest, winning four of six awards given.

"Best in Show" went to the District 8 Striping Crew for developing a way to improve daytime visibility of white stripes on new or diamond-ground concrete by applying white paint with black edges in just one pass.

Responding to District Striping Regional Maintenance Supervisor Paul Bryan's challenge, Senior Maintenance Worker Doyle Clement and co-workers solved the contrast problem with adjustments to a striper that included installing extra hoses and fittings and going to smaller paint tips.

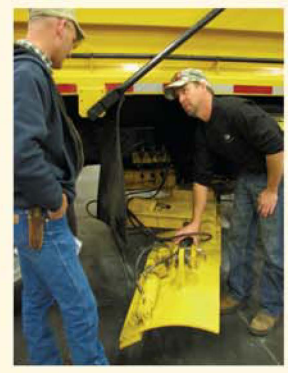
"It's working wonderful," Bryan said.

The cost, less than $250, is minimal compared to the savings realized in striping time (multiple passes) or putting down tape at $5 a foot.

Two awards went to Dora Maintenance: 1. An extension to a belly plow for work usually done with a grader that keeps the dump truck on the pavement; and 2. A sign-post step that eliminates the need to use a ladder and enables work to be done without carrying the sign to a truck parked in or near traffic.

Dora Maintenance Supervisor Shawn Shipley said the innovations were a group effort. "Somebody made a suggestion and then somebody else would add to it until we came up with something that worked."

Two hydraulic cylinders are used to maneuver a piece of molded plate metal attached to the right side of the belly plow. It can be moved up and down and side to side. The crew uses the extension to repair approaches and roadway edges and to cut down shoulders on curves. The innovation helps fill the gap left when the state's grader fleet was reduced.



Angela Eden

**Dora Senior Maintenance Worker Andy Boyd, right, shows how the belly plow extension works.**

The sign step uses two small metal platforms which hook into telespar sign poles. A worker can then work on the sign face in place.

An award went to Sunshine Maintenance in Springfield for developing a sign post straightener. Sunshine crew workers, including Kris Sandgren, now a maintenance crew leader at Springfield Maintenance, devised the tool. Its use means replacing fewer posts.

The Humansville Crew was a finalist in the competition, submitting reusable concrete form saddles, essentially a portable form to match existing concrete pavement without setting traditional forms.

Assistant District Engineer Matt Seiler, D8's Innovations coordinator, said employees have "always supported each other by finding safe, practical and efficient ways to perform tasks or improve processes. This tradition and practice carries forward today and is evident in the results of the innovations challenge."

Each winning crew earned $10,000. The winnings mean an additional $40,000 for the district Maintenance budget. The Striping Crew took home a traveling trophy for "Best in Show."

D9
SouthCentral

# The Significant Impact of the Battle of the Belt

Those who don't work closely with the Battle of the Belt Program may wonder how much impact it can really have. The competition can truly affect lives, as shown by one lucky senior who participated this year.

The Battle of the Belt is a competition between Missouri high schools to encourage the use of seatbelts among students. The program completes observational seatbelt surveys before and after an educational campaign to determine if any increase in seatbelt usage has occurred. This was the first year that Arcadia Valley High School in Ironton, Mo. participated.

According to Arcadia Valley High School Principal Stephen Pursley, the program changed the behavior of many kids. "The kids really got into it. One of our students did not have his seatbelt on when we did our first check and it bothered him so much that he did not "pass" our seatbelt check that he told himself he was not going to ride in a car again without a seatbelt. A couple of days later, he was involved in an accident where he flipped his car with his seatbelt on," said Pursley. That senior was Caleb Sutton.

Caleb was traveling on Route N when he rounded a curve and came upon an accident. When he hit the brakes to avoid a collision, his vehicle flipped. Caleb's mother, Jill Sutton, credits the Battle of the Belt with encouraging him to wear his seatbelt that day. "Steven and I always lecture the kids about that, but kids are kids ... I am sure it stuck with him more because it wasn't just me and his dad harping on him," said Sutton.

According to Mrs. Sutton, when she praised Caleb for wearing his seatbelt that evening, he credited the Battle of the Belt with making him think. "The seatbelt challenge is what helped me make wearing my seatbelt a habit. Without it, I might not have been able to walk away with just a few scratches and a bruise," said Caleb.

Mrs. Sutton praised Principal Pursley and Arcadia Valley High School for participating in the Battle of the Belt Program and encourages other schools to participate. "THANK YOU! I know you do not have to do that for our kiddos and I just wanted you to know how thankful I am that you do. I know that God was watching over him because his car was a mess, but ... it would have been worse if he had not been wearing his seatbelt," said Sutton.

Arcadia Valley High School began the Battle of the Belt competition with a seatbelt usage rate of just 45.4 percent and ended with 82.6 percent usage.

As Caleb Sutton's story shows, the increase in seatbelt usage among teens can truly have an impact on saving lives and reducing injuries. The Missouri teen safety belt usage rate for 2010 was only 66 percent.

Senior Caleb Sutton's vehicle after the rollover accident

Caleb Sutton's vehicle after the rollover accident

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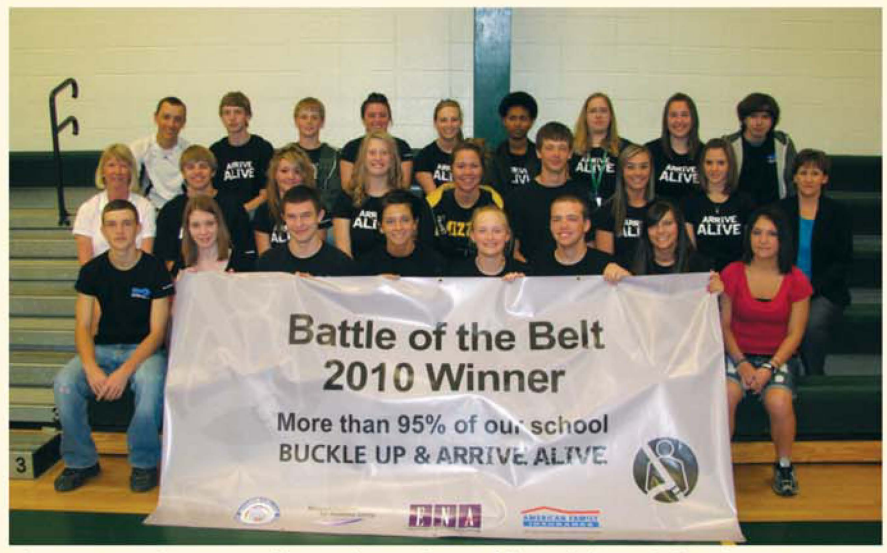
# Kingston High School Wins Battle of the Belt

Kingston High School students won the South Central Regional award for having the highest percentage of seatbelt use, with 98.1 percent. The school won $350.00 made possible by American Family Insurance and the American College of Emergency Physicians. The school increased seatbelt usage by more than 38 percent during the educational campaign.




Kingston student council members pictured from left to right. First Row: Seth Kamper, Tara Graves, Joe Sulzer, Lacey Pashia, Megan Thebeau, Aaron Ross, Kelsey McCracken, Brittany Reid. Second Row: Ms. Susan Schaefer, Alan Shawgo, Kelsey Kissire, Summer Holmes, Misty Jo Guenther, Matt McCoy, Tiffany Yarbrough, Melody DeClue and Mrs. Angie Camillo. Back Row: Ross Politte, Cody Barton, Brendan McCoy, Brittany Juliette, Felicia Kopp, Sidney Apolonio, Jennifer Haarmann, Ashley Burg and B.J. Villmer

# Cuba High School Wins Most Improved Seatbelt Use

Cuba High School won $350 for the most improved seatbelt usage in the Battle of the Belt, by improving seatbelt usage from 33.9 percent to 69.5 percent. Award funding was made possible by American Family Insurance and the American College of Emergency Physicians.

Nine schools participated in the Battle of the Belt in the South Central Region this year. According to Senior Right of Way Specialist Tamara Gregory, who coordinates the Battle of the Belt Program in the South Central Region, the program continues to make a difference. "We're proud of our local schools for showing a commitment to buckling up. Seatbelts save lives," said Gregory.

Traffic crashes are the leading cause of death for people 15-20 years old. Seven out of every 10 teens killed in Missouri crashes are unbuckled.

# D10 Southeast

## D10 Long-Term Safety Awards

D10 recently held a Long-Term Safety Awards Ceremony, honoring safety-sensitive employees who have worked 15, 20 or 25 years without a lost-time accident. Cumulatively, the honorees have worked a total of 465 years without a lost-time accident.

Recipients included:

**15 Year**
- Oliver Heob
- Michael Govro
- Matthew Malone
- Gary Brewer
- Steven Hoernig

**15 Year cont.**
- Stevie Mount
- Jeffrey Jarrell
- Donald Wallace
- Jerry Jackson
- Kevin Williams

**20 Year**
- Keith Gentry
- Stanley Johnson
- Lynn Lewis
- Terry Ross
- Randy Laird
- Joe Jones
- Joseph Crader

**25 Year**
- Richard Lamb
- Justin Cunningham
- Lindell Huskey
- Timothy Cox
- Connie Almond
- David Herbst
- Ronald Ballew

15-Year Recipients

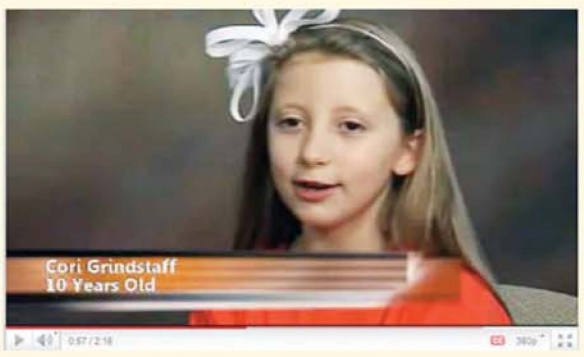
20-Year Recipients

25-Year Recipients

## Work Zone Awareness PSA
### Watch on YouTube

Need a reason to slow down and pay attention in work zones? D10 families can give you several.

For Work Zone Awareness Week, children and grandchildren of those working on Missouri's roadways discussed the importance of driving smart for D10's public service announcement.



**D10 families join together to urge travelers to drive smart in work zones. Watch at: *http://youtube/YqcGvY6kkMs*.**

"I always feel kind of scared when she is on the highways because I don't know what may happen to her," said Cori Grindstaff, granddaughter of Senior Maintenance Worker Helen Grindstaff.

D10 urges motorists to drive smart so our crews and contractors can go home safely at the end of each workday to their families.

To watch the Work Zone Awareness PSA, visit: *http://youtu.be/YqcGvY6kkMs*.

Additional videos of each family are available at: *www.youtube.com/MoDOTSoutheast*.

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## Weed Control Efforts Gain Statewide Recognition

On March 31, employees from the Park Hills maintenance shed were recognized for their efforts to control roadside vegetation by the Missouri Department of Conservation at the Private Land Services Awards Luncheon.

MDC began mapping roadside vegetation in Ste. Genevieve and St. Francois Counties in fall 2009. MDC Private Land Conservationist Jan Dellamano noticed an abundance of invasive weeds along Interstate 55, US 67 and Route 32.

What began as a noxious-weed issue within the two counties, turned into a partnership that would gain statewide recognition by MDC.

"We looked along those major routes because of the traffic on the roadways," said Dellamano. "In addition to the wind, trucks carrying hay or feed often spread all types of seeds, including invasive weed seeds. We knew we wanted to kill these weeds without harming the native grasses and wildflowers."

Dellamano and MDC Natural History Biologist Bob Gillespie had an idea to apply for a grant that would cover the cost of chemicals needed to kill the weeds, and contractors to help spray those chemicals. MDC was awarded a one-year Wildlife Diversity Fund grant to cover these costs.

Since the weed control would take place along major corridors, Dellamano knew he would need to get permission from MoDOT. He set-up a meeting with Park Hills Maintenance Supervisor Donnie Edgar, who not only helped Dellamano learn more about work zones, but offered to help spray rather than hire contractors.

This partnership turned out to be beneficial for both agencies. MoDOT crews learned about mapping, global positioning systems and how to identify different types of invasive weeds. MDC personnel learned about work zone safety and different types of equipment that would best meet their needs.

"With the money we saved by not hiring contractors, we were able to purchase a sprayer similar to MoDOT's to add to our all-terrain vehicle that we use to help spray," said Dellamano.

"When we'd mow or spray in the past, we didn't pay close attention to the types of vegetation out there," said Edgar. "Jan taught us how seeds are spread, to use the global positioning system to map the spread of weeds and the best time to spray."

According to Dellamano, this partnership proved to be so successful that MDC has asked all Private Land Conservationists to contact their local MoDOT sheds in an effort to replicate this effort statewide. While grants are not likely available to cover the whole state, another season of weed control has begun, and a little teamwork can go a long way.

Edgar and Dellamano would like to recognize the following individuals who also helped make this project a success:

**Missouri Department of Transportation Team:**
- Roadside Manager Mark Aufdenberg
- Maintenance Supervisor Donnie Edgar
- Maintenance Supervisor Rick Russell
- Maintenance Crew Leader Terry Walker
- Maintenance Crew Leader Howard Blake
- Senior Maintenance Worker Brian Masson
- Intermediate Maintenance Worker Mike Mahurin
- Intermediate Maintenance Worker Lonnie Gibbs
- Intermediate Maintenance Worker Dwayne Lamar
- Intermediate Maintenance Worker Giles King
- Maintenance Worker Kyle Winch

**Missouri Department of Conservation Team:**
- Private Land Conservationist Jan Dellamano
- Natural History Biologist Bob Gillespie
- Private Land Services Resource Technician Brian Shelton
- Wildlife Resource Aide Kyle Lorenz

**Maintenance Supervisor Donnie Edgar, Private Land Conservationist Jan Dellamano, Intermediate Maintenance Worker Mike Mahurin and Intermediate Maintenance Worker Lonnie Gibbs were recognized at the Missouri Department of Conservation's Annual Meeting for their efforts toward weed control in District 10.**

# Connections

The mission of *Connections* is to be a monthly source of Missouri Department of Transportation news and feature articles that connect employees statewide. It is distributed to MoDOT employees and retirees.

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# MoDOT will Help Light the Way with New Warning System

*by Melissa Black*

MoDOT soon will be lighting the way for other states across the country. Missouri has been honored with the designation as a Lead State in implementing SynchroGUIDE, a sequential work zone warning light system. The SynchroGUIDE system recently was chosen to be a focus technology by the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials Technology Implementation Group.

"We continue to be a shining example of how to implement innovative technology that not only can make our roads safer, but save us money as well," says Troy Pinkerton, Traffic liaison engineer. "This is not only a great honor for us, but it means that MoDOT is leading the way in technology development and can show others how to work efficiently, and save time and resources."

The flashing warning light system offers continuous guidance for work zone drivers by giving the impression of a single light source whether day or night. Although the technology has been used in other parts of the world since 2005, it wasn't approved in the United States until 2008. Missouri was one of the first states to use it last year for a nighttime work zone study on Interstate 70. MoDOT also installed the lights on Interstate 44, and from both studies found they dramatically enhanced the visibility of the work zones for improved safety at a low cost.

"We're now using these lights in many areas of the state, and think they could also be used by utility companies, private contractors, emergency responders and others," Pinkerton says.

AASHTO's TIG searches for outstanding advancements in transportation technology and invests time and money to accelerate their adoption by agencies nationwide. Each year, the TIG selects a highly valuable procedure, process, software, device, or other innovation that has been adopted by at least one agency, is market ready and available for use by other interested agencies.

The TIG's objective is to share information with AASHTO member agencies, local agencies, and their industry partners to improve the nation's transportation system. Now that the SynchroGUIDE has been chosen for implementation, the TIG will form and fund support for a Lead State's team to promote expanded use of the technology. MoDOT will help serve on the team and guide the expanded use of the technology. The entire process can take a couple of years to complete.

"Our primary role as a Lead State will be to share our knowledge about the warning light system to help other potential users understand how it can benefit them," Pinkerton says. "We'll also be able to reduce the learning period for agencies choosing to implement and adopt the technology."

Information about past TIG technologies and other information can be found at *tig.transportation.org.*

# Lane Departure Fatalities Decrease 40 Percent

That rumble you're hearing while driving down Missouri highways isn't your stomach – it's a rumble stripe and it's keeping more Missourians alive. Up to 100 lives a year are saved on major roads by rumble stripes and bigger, brighter signs; wider stripes; and other visibility improvements made by MoDOT.

Improved roadway visibility reduced lane departure fatalities by 40 percent since 2005, helping Missouri traffic deaths fall to their lowest point since 1949. Even with improvements, 818 people still died on our highways in 2010 and nearly 6,000 were seriously injured.

"While we've made great strides, in reality, we've only made these improvements to a few thousand miles, and we have more than 33,000 miles in our system," said Don Hillis, MoDOT's Director of System Management. "More investment in transportation is needed to help drive fatalities and disabling injuries down even more."

In 2005, Missouri had more than 400 lane departure fatalities. By 2010, that number was down below 250.

When drivers stray from the travel lane, rumble stripes/strips rouse their attention to allow a safe recovery. Rumble stripes also are helpful in alerting drivers to the lane limits where weather conditions reduce driver visibility.

These and other efforts have made transportation safer in Missouri, but there's still more work to do. However, funding for MoDOT's construction program has been cut in half, and Missouri stands to lose the progress that's been made. Without adequate investments, future improvements may be in jeopardy, placing safety, jobs, mobility and the state's economy at risk.

Transportation is personal. It's time to find a new, dedicated funding source for transportation so we can continue to save lives, support jobs, provide better transportation options and attract businesses and tourists to our state.